

this policy to reach across the partisan divide and get a good bill out of the United States Senate.

The issue I speak about is not a political issue. It's not a partisan issue. This is an American issue that requires consensus to do what is smart and right about preserving and protecting our national forests. I look forward to working with members of both parties to get a good bill out of the United States Senate.

Within sight of where we stand are the results of wise forest policy and the ruins of unwise forest policy. For those who live here, it's the difference between lives surrounded by natural beauty and lives disrupted by natural disaster. We can serve the interests of this country by working together, by listening to people who know

what they're talking about, and putting together commonsense policy to preserve our forests, to make them healthy so that when we step back after our time and service, people will say, "Job well done."

Thanks for coming. May God bless those who suffer, may God bless those who serve our country, and may God continue to bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:55 a.m. at Inspiration Rock. In his remarks, he referred to Dan Oltrogge and Larry Humphrey, incident commanders, Type I Southwest Area Incident Management Teams; Ron Senn, Santa Catalina District Ranger, U.S. Forest Service; Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell of Colorado; and Senator Jon Kyl of Arizona.

Remarks Announcing the Nomination of Governor Michael O. Leavitt To Be Environmental Protection Agency Administrator in Aurora, Colorado *August 11, 2003*

The President. Good afternoon. First, I want to make a comment about some foreign policy. Today's departure of Charles Taylor from Liberia is an important step toward a better future for the Liberian people. The United States will work with the Liberian people and with the international community to achieve a lasting peace after more than a decade of turmoil and suffering.

The United States will help ECOWAS and the humanitarian relief organizations to get aid to those who need it. I appreciate the efforts of many African leaders, most especially Nigerian President Obasanjo, Ghanaian President Kufuor, South African President Mbeki, Mozambican President Chissano. Their continued leadership will be needed in the weeks and months ahead as a new government is formed and the Liberian people seek to chart a future of peace and stability.

Earlier today, I spoke in Arizona about the urgent need to safeguard America's forests from wildfire. It's one of the many environmental challenges that face our Nation. Those challenges go beyond our forests. We must also be vigilant in protecting the air and soil and waters around us.

This is the primary responsibility of our Environmental Protection Agency, and today I am pleased to introduce my nominee to lead that Agency, Governor Mike Leavitt of Utah. I appreciate so very much Jackie being here, as well as Michael, Taylor, Anne Marie, Westin, and Chase, who's not with us. The Leavitt family is a great American family, primarily because Dixie and Anne, the mom and dad of the Governor, worked hard to make it such, and I'm honored they are here as well. Thank you all for coming.

I also appreciate the fact that the leader of the house and the senate from Utah have joined us today.

I selected Mike Leavitt because he is a trusted friend, a capable executive, and a man who understands the obligations of environmental stewardship. With the Senate's approval, Mike Leavitt will lead an agency with 18,000 dedicated employees in offices all across our country. The work of the EPA is vital and reflects a national consensus on the importance of good stewardship.

During the last three decades, we've seen extraordinary progress in cleaning our air and protecting our land and making our water more pure. The quality of our air is far better than it was in the 1970s. Many more of our lakes and rivers are safe for fishing and swimming. Toxic emissions have declined, and we're bringing new resources and programs to reduce runoff and erosion. We're making real progress protecting endangered species and helping them recover.

Mike Leavitt will come to the EPA with a strong environmental record and a strong desire to improve on what has taken place during the last three decades. He served for over a decade as Governor of an important State. As cochair of the Western Regional Air Partnership, Governor Leavitt has been a leader in applying high standards in air quality, and he understands the importance of clear standards in every environmental policy. He respects the ability of State and local governments to meet those standards, rejects the old ways of command and control from above. He was twice reelected by the people of Utah, in

part because he leads by consensus and focuses on results instead of process.

In Utah and beyond, he has gained wide respect for handling environmental issues in a spirit of openness and bipartisanship. These qualities and his experience will make Mike Leavitt a fine addition to my administration. I will count on him to continue the good work begun by former Administrator Whitman and Acting Administrator Horinko.

He will join my Cabinet with a full agenda and with my full confidence. Mike, I appreciate your willingness to serve. I thank the people of Utah as you leave office to take on this incredibly important assignment in our Nation's Capital.

[At this point, Governor Leavitt made brief remarks.]

The President. Great job. Thank you. Thank you all. Good job, Michael.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:34 p.m. at the Marriott Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to former President Charles Taylor of Liberia; President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria; President John Agyekum Kufuor of Ghana; President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa; President Joaquim Alberto Chissano of Mozambique; Jacalyn S. Leavitt, wife of Gov. Leavitt, and their children Michael, Taylor, Anne Marie, Westin, and Chase; Martin R. Stephens, speaker, Utah State House of Representatives; and L. Alma "Al" Mansell, president, Utah State Senate. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Gov. Leavitt.

Remarks at a Bush-Cheney Dinner in Denver, Colorado August 11, 2003

The President. Thank you all very much. I appreciate you coming. Thanks for the

warm welcome. There is nothing like heading west.